

# 2014 Awards: Most Improved

This one is always up for some debate.

We'll start by just listing off some contenders.

First up is the suddenly dominant Lashley. This was what WWE should have done with him for years: find the guy a mouthpiece and let him just hurt people. He's a genetic freak that can wrestle on the mat, so let him do that instead of trying to make him a superhero. I never got why WWE wanted him to be a face when he has the personality of a turnip, but ever since he became a monster heel, he was one of the highlights of show.

Ethan Carter III is the same thing but as an intellectual heel instead of a monster. The guy went from being nothing in WWE to one of the best acts in TNA, very much in the same vein as Rick Rude back in 1991. Carter is going to be a player in TNA going forward and I could easily see him winning the World Title in the coming year.

The Dusts have gone from eh to one of the top teams in the company, though that's not really saying much.

Seth Rollins started the year as the forgotten member of the Shield and became a strong contender for Wrestler of the Year. You couple that with more than holding his own on the mic and it's hard to argue that he's shot through the roof this year.

Tyson Kidd...the more I think about this one the less I buy into it. It's not so much that he got better but more along the lines of his got pushed. He's basically the same wrestler but with facts and cats. I like what I'm seeing out of him, but it's not like he's gotten insanely good overnight or anything.

We'll give the Divas a shot and include Charlotte. She went from a borderline disaster to the woman who can actually look down on the rest of the NXT girls. I have no idea where this came from but suddenly her title defenses are one of the highlights of the big NXT shows, which I don't think anyone was expecting. That's definitely worth a nomination.

Finally, you have to mention Tyler Breeze. The guy went from a goon to tearing the house down every time he was in a big match. That match he had against Zayn at Takeover was outstanding and he's nailed so much of the character all year long. This is one of the best surprises all year and he's gone through the roof.

At the end of the day though, I have to go with Rollins. I would have bet on him being Kofi Kingston but he's looking more like a Randy Orton every day. He's always had talent, but there are a dozen guys on the roster who have untapped skills. To go from the potential he had to realizing that potential is a huge improvement and worthy of the award.

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## Smackdown – November 7, 2014: Quite The Show. Off.

### Smackdown

Date: November 7, 2014

Location: Times Union Center, Albany, New York

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Tom Phillips

As we switch from red to blue this week, the big story has Randy Orton being thrown out of the Authority and laid out with a pair of Curb Stomps. Other than that we have Cena and the Authority trying to firm up their teams for Survivor Series. So far both teams have only a few people but we have a few weeks to get ready. Let's get to it.

Tag Team Titles: Stardust/Goldust vs. Usos

The Dusts are defending and this is inside a cage with pins, submissions or escape to win. Stardust tries to escape early but Jey makes a save. All four come in and we have an early standoff. We settle down to Goldust getting double teamed in the corner until Jimmy gets two off a standing flip splash. Jimmy sends him into the cage for the same result but his

cross body only hits steel.

We take a break and come back with Goldust rubbing Jimmy's face against the cage. A chinlock doesn't get Goldust anywhere as Jimmy fights up and climbs the cage, only to be taken down with an electric chair. The second chinlock has Jimmy in more trouble but he fights up and climbs again. Goldust makes another stop but gets nailed by Whisper in the Wind.

Jey comes in off a hot tag to clean house and sends Stardust into the cage, setting up a superkick for two. Everything breaks down and Cross Rhodes gets two on Jey. Stardust goes up but Jey makes a save. All four guys get on turnbuckles, allowing Jimmy to superplex Goldust, setting up a Superfly Splash from Jey. Goldust is done but the legal Stardust grabs a rollup out of nowhere to retain at 12:15.

**Rating:** B-. That kickout of the Cross Rhodes helped this a good deal but I'm tired of seeing these guys fight so many times. Hopefully this wraps things up and we can get onto some new challengers. That brings us to the big problem though: who else can fight them? Los Matadores? Or are we stuck waiting on another thrown together team?

Network hype time.

We recap the Authority's issues from Monday, culminating in Orton being knocked out so badly that he thinks he's an actor.

Kane is in the ring to talk about handling Orton before Survivor Series. Randy should serve as an example of what's coming to anyone else stands up to the Authority. Dolph Ziggler thinks he can survive Team Cena, but tonight he has to survive against Kane inside that steel cage. Back to Survivor Series, Team Authority has an open spot.

Kane wants to bring out a man that has everything they're looking for but Cesaro cuts him off. Cesaro says he can survive everything WWE has thrown at him and would love to be on Team Authority. Kane says he wasn't thinking about Cesaro, but if he can beat the guy Kane was thinking of, he can be on Team Authority.

Cesaro vs. Ryback

This is joined in progress after a break with Cesaro driving him into the corner and putting on a chinlock. A low dropkick to the face gets two on Ryback and a suplex gets the same. Back to the chinlock but Ryback fights up and flips Cesaro down. A big spinebuster puts Cesaro down and there's the Meat Hook, only to have Cesaro escape Shell Shock.

Ryback is sent shoulder first into the post and a top rope elbow gives Cesaro two more. Cesaro loads up a suplex but Ryback counters into one of his own, only to have Cesaro drive upside down knees to Ryback's head. Ryback grabs Cesaro's leg as it comes down though and Shell Shocks him for the pin at 3:53.

**Rating:** C. Nice power match here with a good ending. I like stuff like that instead of just picking someone up and hitting your finisher as it looks like the guys are thinking instead of just following a script to a match. Ryback is starting to get momentum again and that's a good thing for the weak face side of the roster.

Kane applauds Ryback but Ryback walks away without acknowledging him.

#### R-Truth vs. Adam Rose

This is a result of Truth saying the Bunny was the real star of the team. Truth nails a shoulder to start and does a quick Bunny hop. Rose puts his hand up and jumps into Truth's arms, only to be thrown down. The Bunny jumps up on the apron, allowing Truth to roll up Rose for the pin at 1:24.

Rose lays out the Bunny post match and dances with the Rosebuds. The Bunny looks stunned. Well, as stunned as a Bunny can look.

Here's the returning Christian for one more....episode of the Peep Show. He asks the fans who they think is winning at Survivor Series and of course the people are behind Team Cena. Guest Dean Ambrose cuts him off though as he doesn't like being patience. Christian asks what it's like to be Dean now, because the last thing Christian remembers is Dean ticking off the entire roster as a member of the Shield.

Dean says he has no friends and is always looking over his shoulder but

he wouldn't have it any other way. As for Bray Wyatt, Dean doesn't really know why he's coming after him. Dean doesn't have a title that Bray wants or anything like that, so maybe Bray is just preying on people like he always does. Bray likes to manipulate people's minds, but Dean is just crazy enough that it doesn't work. It's a thrill to live the way he does, riding the edge of a lightning bolt. He loves living this way...and here's Wyatt to cut him off.

Bray says Dean has nothing to fear because he has nothing to lose. There was a time when Dean had the security of the Shield around him but that was taken away, leaving Dean like a fish on land, gasping for air. Bray however, is a healer. He healed Harper and Rowan and now he can heal Ambrose. Wyatt can take Dean's hand and heal all his pain, but not everyone can be saved.

Daniel Bryan once defied him and now Bryan is nowhere to be seen. What does Dean have to lose? His own father turned his back on him. Does he still send Ambrose postcards from prison? Bray invites Dean to prove him wrong, so Dean goes up the ramp as the lights cut off again. Ambrose gets to the stage and there's no one in sight.

Video on preacher Xavier Woods.

We look at Rusev beating Sheamus on Monday's post show. Since it's an "exclusive", we only see the last three minutes or so. After the match, Lana said they were taking the title back to Russia for Putin.

AJ says Brie slapped her on Monday but it was the evil twin that made her do so. Brie comes in to apologize, but it's a ruse so Nikki can get in a cheap shot.

### Summer Rae vs. Natalya

This is due to Summer spending too much time around Tyson Kidd earlier today. Considering how much Tyson and Natalya hate each other on Total Divas, it's odd that Natalya would be annoyed at all. Kidd is on commentary and takes credit for weakening Sheamus for Rusev. Summer takes Natalya down with a bodyscissors until Nattie comes back with a slam. Cole suggests Kidd support his wife, so he gets up and tells her to put

on the Sharpshooter. The distraction lets Summer grab a rollup for the pin at 1:34.

2K15 hype.

Cena vs. Ryback on Raw in England.

Dolph says he'll do whatever it takes to get rid of the Authority. Cue HHH, who is surprised Ziggler is here after the beating Rollins gave him on Monday. Orton isn't here tonight though, so who is going to save him tonight? Maybe he should save himself by joining the Authority.

Cole brings out the founder of an organization called Soldier Socks and a wounded soldier named Dan Rose. The founder talks about the organization as Rose is put into a different wheelchair. We get a news clip about some new technology that allows wounded soldiers to walk again. Back in the arena, Rose talks about losing the use of his legs due to a roadside bomb in Afghanistan. Using the new equipment, Rose is able to stand up and walk across the stage using two walking sticks. Rose gets a well deserved standing ovation. That's a very cool moment to see and one of those things that is almost hard to believe.

### Dolph Ziggler vs. Kane

Inside a cage and non-title. Before the match, we get the eyes vignette from Raw. Ziggler looks at the screen and isn't sure what to make of it. Kane slugs away to start but gets caught in a faceplant for two. Dolph tries to climb out a few times but gets sent into the cage for his efforts. We take a break and come back with Dolph getting kicked in the face for two.

Kane takes off a turnbuckle pad but misses a charge into another corner, setting up Ziggler's running DDT. Both guys climb to the top rope and both quickly get crotched for their efforts. Ziggler dives into an uppercut but escapes the chokeslam. He tries to escape and gets slammed down, setting up the chokeslam to knock him silly. Kane calls for a tombstone but takes WAY too long, allowing Ziggler to hit the Zig Zag for two.

Dolph takes too long going for the door, setting up a collision to put both guys down again. Back up and Kane misses a charge into the exposed buckle. Dolph climbs his back and over the cage but Kane kicks the door open to break Ziggler's balance and leave him hanging on the door. Kane goes to escape but Dolph kicks the door onto his head and drops down to win at 11:36.

**Rating:** B. I liked this far better than I was expecting to as Ziggler got to look like a big deal in a showdown instead of having to have a bunch of run-ins to water the match down. Kane is a good guy for something like this as he looks intimidating and is a good monster to conquer. One thing I don't get though: why not make this a title match? Kane is more than worthy of a midcard title shot and you can give Ziggler a win in a fairly big match. That could happen far more often than it does but you rarely see it. Good match though with a solid ending.

**Overall Rating:** B. This was the best Smackdown in probably months with two good matches that felt big and some promos that made the show feel like it mattered. It didn't feel like it was a boring show that just there to fill in a few hours and then mean nothing. We even got something resembling an explanation from Wyatt for why he interrupted the Cell match. While most of the stuff isn't going to go anywhere, it's nice to treat this show like it matters for a change. Fun stuff tonight and the kind of show Smackdown needs to be more often.

### Results

Stardust/Goldust b. Usos – Rollup to Jey

Ryback b. Cesaro – Shell Shock

R-Truth b. Adam Rose – Rollup

Summer Rae b. Natalya – Rollup

Dolph Ziggler b. Kane – Ziggler escaped the cage

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# Survivor Series Count-Up – 1996: They're At The Starting Gate

## Survivor Series 1996

Date: November 17, 1996

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City, New York

Attendance: 18,647

Commentators: Jim Ross, Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

To MSG we go as we're in a very different era here. Shawn is world champion but is also burned out and needing some time away from the ring. He's defending against Sid tonight, but that's not the important thing tonight. There's a major debut, but aside from that, we've got Bret Hart returning for the first time since losing the title to Shawn to face a bald headed Texan who is tired of hearing how great guys like Hart are and wants to prove how great he is. His name is Stone Cold Steve Austin and tonight is his coming out party. Let's get to it.

After a quick look at what's been going on in MSG to hype the show we're ready to go.

Team Furnas and Lafon vs. Team Owen Hart/British Bulldog



Doug Furnas, Phillip Lafon, Godwinns

Owen Hart, British Bulldog, New Rockers

The New Rockers are Leif Cassidy (Al Snow) and Marty Jannetty. Furnas and Lafon are feuding with Hart and Bulldog for Smith and Hart's tag titles. Furnas and Lafon were a team who mainly worked in AJPW in Japan who were better than they're given credit for. Apparently Furnas is the one with the long hair. Got it. I can never remember which is which. Lafon vs. Marty starts things off and they trade arm holds, but Lafon avoids a monkey flip. The Rockers are heels here if that's not clear.

Off to Cassidy who is a better technical guy. Lafon goes after the leg but Cassidy comes back with a leg drag. Off to Phineas who spits into the air, catches it, and rubs it in his hair. Cassidy messes with Phineas and hides in the ropes as a result. A clothesline puts Godwin down and it's off to Owen for some stomping. Off to Bulldog for more beating but I keep getting distracted by the agents and other people coming in and out of the door to the backstage area at the top of the aisle.

Eventually we get down to Marty vs. Phineas with Jannetty taking over with a jumping back elbow. Marty loads up his Superbomb but gets crotched. Phineas loads up a superplex (JR: "How stupid was that of him?") but gets shoved down. Marty misses an elbow and there's the hot tag minus the heat to bring in Henry vs. Marty. Phineas dives into the corner to stop Henry from hitting the buckle and it's the Slop Drop (reverse DDT) to eliminate Jannetty. Owen immediately spinwheel kicks Henry to tie it up.

Phineas goes into one of his fits and beats up everyone, but Bulldog gets a blind tag and powerslams Phineas to make it 3-2. All three of those eliminations were in less than a minute so I didn't skip anything. It's Furnas/Lafon vs. Cassidy/Hart/Bulldog. Furnas and Bulldog start things off and Furnas is in trouble. Off to Cassidy for a spinning Rock Bottom for two. Furnas speeds things up but Owen gets a blind tag in and hits a sweet missile dropkick for two.

A fisherman's suplex gets two for Owen and some heel triple teaming has Furnas in trouble. JR goes on another rant about how the two referees are

making no difference here. This is during the time when JR had gone heel for the first time but it wouldn't last much longer. Back to Cassidy who hits a gutbuster but doesn't cover for some reason. Cassidy misses a charge and there's the tag to Lafon, who hits a quick reverse superplex to eliminate Leif and get us down to the main two tag teams.

It's Lafon vs. Bulldog with Davey being dropped on his face. Owen comes in with a cross body for two. A neckbreaker and a legdrop get two on Lafon as does an enziguri. Back to Bulldog who kicks Lafon low to keep control. Things break down a bit and Lafon hits a quick sunset flip on Smith for the elimination. It's Owen vs. Furnas and Lafon with Lafon in the ring to start the last part.

Owen goes after the leg including an Indian Deathlock and the Sharpshooter but Furnas makes the save. Lafon hits a spin kick to take Hart down and there's the hot tag to Furnas (pun intended). Doug destroys Owen with suplexes and a release German gets the final pin. Furnas beat him in about thirty seconds.

**Rating:** C+. This didn't suck but it didn't hit a level they were reaching for. Furnas and Lafon didn't look right here and the crowd didn't really know who they were yet, so the place was hardly rocking. It's not a bad match but it didn't quite work like it was supposed to. Things will pick up soon on this show though.

Kevin Kelly is in the boiler room with Mankind, who he abandoned Undertaker for at Summerslam. Tonight the huge rivalry continues with Bearer locked in a small cage above the ring. This is when Mankind was still relatively new (he debuted about six and a half months before this) and no one knew what to make of him yet. All anyone knew was he could beat up Undertaker which was unheard of at the time.

### Mankind vs. Undertaker

Bearer has to be locked in the small cage. This is a Cornette Special. Taker lowers down from the rafters in what can only be called a Batman costume minus the mask. Taker also has on a new attire for this, which is basically a biker vest and leather pants. That would become his standard look for the next three years or so. Mankind rams him into the small cage

to start and they head to the floor very quickly.

Back in and Taker gets all fired up before busting out a drop toehold. He goes after Mankind's right arm to take away the Mandible Claw, which is the only hold that can stop Undertaker. Taker puts on a cross armbreaker of all things, which is something he would occasionally bust out when he was MMA Cowboy Of Death mode but I didn't think he did it back here. Apparently if Taker wins he gets five minutes with Mankind. We head back to the floor with Taker ramming the arm into the barricade again. Back in and Taker misses an elbow but he sits up immediately.

We head to the floor for the third time via a Cactus Clothesline and they head into the crowd. Mankind charges at Taker but gets backdropped over the barricade and onto the concrete. A low blow puts Taker down on the apron and down onto the floor, where Mankind hits the elbow off the apron. Taker gets sent into the buckle but comes back with an elbow to the face.

Taker headbutts him halfway out of the ring as this continues to be a total brawl so far. Undertaker bites on the Claw hand but he lowers his head and gets piledriven down for two. Mankind loads up the Claw but Taker blocks the hands. The Tombstone is countered and there's the Claw. Taker sends him out to the floor which is one of the first times that hold has been broken.

Old School hits but Mankind pops up and hits a double arm DDT to put Taker down. Mankind goes up but jumps into a chokeslam. The Claw goes on but Taker chokeslams him anyway. Cool spot. Taker tries a cross body but he crashes over the top and out to the floor. Mankind tries a flip dive off the apron but crashes just as badly as Taker did. Back in and Mankind tries a quick sleeper, only to be suplexed down by Taker.

Even JR is talking about how much more wrestling Undertaker is doing here which is indeed a strange sight. Mankind pulls out a foreign object to stab at Taker with. Unlike Lawler's style, there's an actual object here for Mankind to hit him with. Mankind climbs on his back in the corner but Taker pulls Mankind down and KILLS HIM with the Tombstone for the pin.

**Rating:** B. Foley said in his book that this is his least favorite of the

series with Taker, which is saying a lot because this is a very solid brawl. It's physical for the full fifteen minutes it runs with two large guys beating the tar out of each other. On top of that, it's cool to see Taker work a new style while in an entirely new attire as well. Good stuff here.

Bearer's cage is lowered to Taker but the Executioner (Terry Gordy in a hood) makes the save. Taker beats him up but Bearer escapes.

Sunny (still smoking hot and not smoking crack here) comes out for commentary.

Team HHH, with the IC Champion as captain, is ready for Marc Mero. Mark Henry was supposed to be on HHH's team but he's injured. I'm shocked too.

#### Team Hunter Hearst Helmsley vs. Team Marc Mero

Hunter Hearst Helmsley, Jerry Lawler, Goldust, Crush

Marc Mero, Jake Roberts, The Stalker, Rocky Maivia

I think you know everyone here. Stalker is Barry Windham as a kind of military guerrilla warfare character. This is Rocky's debut, so who do you think the focus is going to be on? Lawler and Roberts are feuding as well. Mero has Sable with him here. Sunny immediately freaks out on JR for suggesting Sable is hotter. She yells about being natural while Sable is about to melt near the fireworks. Rocky's outfit looks ridiculous with kind of a cape but made of streamers that goes over his chest as well. Apparently Roberts was a surprise partner and the replacement for Henry.

Jake comes out with the big yellow snake sans bag and chases the team off with it. Goldust and Mero get things going with Marc cranking on the arm. They both block hiptosses so Mero rolls him up for two. Off to Stalker who is now just a guy in camo pants and a WWF t-shirt. Back to Mero to fire off a bunch of hiptosses to Goldie who is a bit calmer than he was last year. Rollup gets two for Mero and it's back to the arm. Stalker pounds away at Goldie's ribs before it's off to HHH. Off to Mero to face Crush as HHH wanted nothing to do with Wildman (Mero).

Mero grabs the arm and for you trivia guys out there, Rocky's first

official time in a WWF ring is against Crush. It lasts all of six seconds before it's off to Lawler who is immediately punched, kicked in the face, and knocked to the floor. You know Lawler is going to go insane with the selling too. Lawler wants nothing to do with Rocky so it's off to HHH. Vince explains that Rocky's name is Dwayne Johnson and that he took the name of his father and grandfather to come up with Rocky Maivia.

In the first of many matches, HHH stomps away in the corner and JR is in football mode. Goldust comes in and drops an elbow followed by some rights to the head. Crush comes in and works on the back for a bit before it's off to Lawler. Back to HHH as Sunny makes fun of Vince for allegedly having a toupee. Rocky pounds away and backdrops HHH before it's off to Roberts.

Jake beats up everyone but tries to get to Lawler instead of going after the legal HHH. The shortarm clothesline takes HHH down but the DDT doesn't work. Off to Lawler who makes fun of Roberts for being an alcoholic. Lawler keeps doing it and there's the DDT for the first elimination. Goldust comes in next as JR makes fun of the lack of tan on Roberts. We hit the chinlock for a bit until jawbreaker gets Jake out of it. Off to Stalker as JR and Sunny talk about Barry wearing lucky boots. Crush hits Stalker in the back and the Curtain Call (reverse suplex drop) gets the pin for Goldust to tie things up.

Mero comes in immediately to hit a knee lift to take over. Goldie gets in a shot and HHH finally comes in to beat on the other captain. A backbreaker puts Mero down and it's back to Crush. This is during Crush's gang member phase and he couldn't look more out of place with his partners at this point. A legdrop gets two for Crush and it's off to Goldie. Back to Crush for another backbreaker for two. Things are slowing down a bit here.

HHH comes in again and puts on an abdominal stretch. He gets caught holding the ropes and hiptossed out as is his custom with referees. A sunset flip can't get HHH down before he makes the tag to Goldust. HHH is back in about five seconds later and let's look at Sunny! Ok I can't complain about that one as much. Jake is pulled in sans tag, allowing Mero to hit a moonsault press on HHH for the elimination. That was a very

messy sequence with all the tags with nothing happening between them and the non-tag to Jake. Either that or I missed a tag and Mero was totally illegal when he pinned HHH.

It's Mero/Rocky/Roberts vs. Crush/HHH. Crush comes in next and is almost immediately dropkicked out to the floor. Mero loads up a dive but Goldust makes a save and shoves Crush out of the way. Back inside, Crush's Heart Punch (exactly what it sounds like) pins Mero. We were looking at a replay when it happened though so that's hearsay. Roberts comes in, misses the short clothesline and is Heart Punched out as well.

We're left with Rocky (who actually gets a face chant in MSG at this point) vs. Goldust and Crush. He starts with the one not painted like an Academy Award and accepts a Test of Strength for some reason. A small package out of nowhere gets two for Maivia and here's Goldust again. Rocky cross bodies Crush for no count as both bad guys are in the ring at once. Goldust hits Rocky low which isn't illegal apparently but Crush Heart Punches Goldie. Cross body pins Crush and about thirty seconds later, a shoulder breaker (Rocky's original finisher) gets the final pin.

**Rating:** C+. This dragged a bit in the middle, but it accomplished three goals: Roberts got to knock Lawler out cold, Mero got to pin HHH to continue their feud, and Rocky got to debut strongly. The problem is the rest of the match wasn't much to see. Maivia winning over guys like Crush and Goldust is a good thing because it's unrealistic to have him beat the IC Champion and beating Lawler doesn't mean anything because Lawler is a career jobber in the WWF. Crush is a big imposing guy who is also a jobber, but at least he looks intimidating. Goldust has credentials too and a loss isn't going to hurt him. Smart booking.

We recap Bret vs. Austin in arguably the real main event of the night. Austin has spent weeks or months talking about how what Hart did means nothing. Bret hasn't been seen since Wrestlemania when he lost to Shawn. Tonight we have to see if Austin can back up what he's saying against a rusty Hitman. The hype on this was excellent and still works to this day.

Bret says MSG is holy ground for him.

Steve Austin vs. Bret Hart

They stare each other down in the middle of the ring and Austin flips Hart off. This feels like a huge fight which is exactly what it's supposed to do. Austin takes Bret into the corner and gives a clean break. Bret goes for Austin's leg and they go into the corner as well for another clean break. I love matches where the guys mirror each other. JR says neither of these guys have ever submitted in the WWF. That's not actually true but we'll go with it for the sake of simplicity.

Austin actually wins a technical battle and cranks on the arm. Bret does the same and adds a hammerlock. They fight for wristlocks and Bret takes it to the mat, working on the arm. Austin fights up and takes his head off with an elbow. Bret stays technical, Austin turns it into a brawl. This is going to have some good psychology in it I'd assume. Bret takes it right back to the mat and cranks on the arm again.

Back up and Austin drops Bret with a Stun Gun and immediately chokes. Hit the neck, work on the neck. It's not complicated. Austin stomps on the neck and throat before slingshotting Bret's throat into the bottom rope. An elbow to the neck/chest sends Bret to the floor and Austin is starting to roll. Back in and Austin hooks a chinlock before dropping knees to the chest/throat for two.

They slug it out with Austin knocking Bret into the corner. Bret comes back with an atomic drop (which Vince calls a reverse piledriver because he's Vince McMahon and isn't a very good announcer) and a clothesline followed by a Russian legsweep for two. A bulldog attempt by Hart is countered by sending him chest first into the buckle. Austin loads up a superplex but Bret slams him down and hits a top rope elbow for a delayed two.

Austin escapes a backbreaker with a rake of the eyes as momentum shifts again. Bret gets sent to the floor and Austin just pounds on him with forearms and punches. Austin rams him back first into the post as the attacks shifts to the back. Bret comes back by sending him into the barricade, breaking the thing apart. They head into the front row and knock the barricade over. Austin is in trouble again and Bret chases him to the other side of the ring.

Steve is like screw this defense thing and sling shots Bret onto the Spanish announce table. They fight underneath the table with Austin pounding away. Austin was a smart heel in that instead of standing around, he wanted to beat on Bret even more when he had Bret down. Back in and Austin drops a middle rope elbow for two. A running crotch attack to Bret's back gets another two and Austin is getting frustrated.

Off to an abdominal stretch and of course Austin grabs the rope. Back up and Bret wins a slugout before Stun Gunning Austin right back to take over again. A piledriver puts Steve down for two and Bret is exhausted. Bret hits a backbreaker and goes up, only to get crotched and superplexed down. Austin has that look in his eye where you know he's feeling it. Bret hooks Austin's feet after the superplex but only gets two.

Bret goes after Austin and walks into a Stunner but it only gets two. It gets another two and make that four. Austin is all ticked off now and pounds away at Bret before getting two more. He puts Bret in a solid Texas Cloverleaf but Bret still won't quit. He makes the rope and the fans breathe a sigh of relief. Austin sends him into the corner but Bret's knee gives out and Bret's back hits the post.

That gets two and Austin goes back to the Cloverleaf. Scratch that as he makes it a bow and arrow instead. It's amazing how much different that broken neck made Austin. He's a completely different guy here and it works really well too. Austin grabs the ropes to block a Sharpshooter and there's a sleeper but Austin hits a jawbreaker to escape. Austin slaps on the Million Dollar Dream but Bret climbs up the buckles and backflips onto Austin for the surprise pin. Steve is stunned, no pun intended. Apparently this was a #1 contenders match. Ok then.

**Rating:** A+. It's Austin vs. Hart for 25 minutes. Were you expecting anything but a masterpiece? This match isn't remembered for one reason: they had a rematch which is one of the greatest matches of all time. This however is liked better by a lot of people and I can easily get that. This is a pure, hard hitting wrestling match which ends with a wrestling counter. The psychology here is incredible with Austin wanting to prove he can go move for move with Bret before finally getting outsmarted when Austin was frustrated and trying one of his old moves. This is one of the



best pairings of all time.

Sid is ready for Shawn tonight.

### Team Farroq vs. Team Yokozuna

Farroq, Vader, Razor Ramon, Diesel

Yokozuna, Flash Funk, Savio Vega, Jimmy Snuka

Snuka is a mystery partner, Yoko literally must weigh 700lbs, and these are the fake Ramon and Diesel. Diesel here is more famous as Kane. Cornette is on commentary here and freaks out because of Snuka, who was inducted into the Hall of Fame last night. This is when the HOF was even more of a joke than it is today. Funk and Vader get things going as this match couldn't be more filler if it tried.

Vader pummels him in the corner but Funk comes back with a kick that misses by so much that even Vince has to say it didn't hit. Vader goes down anyway. Vader is sent to the floor and Funk hits a moonsault to take him out and send Cornette into heart attack mode. Back in and Vader powerbombs him down but it's off to Yoko. That goes nowhere so it's off to Farroq vs. Savio. This is Farroq's debut with the Nation of Domination which is just him at this point.

Razor comes in and JR, the guy that brought them in, wants nothing to do with them. JR says he'd be a better manager than Cornette would.

Cornette: "You couldn't manage a Wendy's!" JR: "I could if you were in town." Razor can't do the fallaway slam so it's off to Diesel. Remember that this is New York City so guess how well this is received. Diesel pounds on Funk, Funk fires back, Diesel knocks him down, CAN WE GET THIS OVER WITH ALREADY???

Funk tries a sunset flip but gets chokebombed for his efforts. Off to Farroq who gets flipped around by Funk but Flash walks into a snap spinebuster. Here's Vader for some mauling before Savio gets the tag. Off to Snuka who charges into a Diesel knee. Vader vs. Snuka now and Superfly actually slams him.

Off to Savio who gets beaten up by Farroq on the floor. Back in and

Diesel Jackknifes Snuka for the first elimination. Off to Snuka vs. Ramon now with Snuka slamming him down and hitting the Superfly Splash for the elimination. Then everyone brawls in the ring and EVERYONE IS FREAKING DQ'ED TO END THE MATCH.

**Rating:** F. There was no reason for this match to happen, Ramon and Diesel were STUPID, Yoko was disgustingly fat, Farroq was a waste of a debut, Snuka isn't a good surprise at all. There's nothing to see here and it was one of the worst matches I can remember in a long time. Also it's less than ten minutes long, making it the shortest Survivor Series match ever.

We recap Sid vs. Shawn. They used to be partners and now they're fighting over the title. Sid is nuts and that's about it.

#### WWF World Title: Shawn Michaels vs. Sycho Sid

Sid's name in pyro was always cool. The fans aren't all that thrilled with Shawn but it's not booing. Shawn charges at Sid and is immediately knocked down with right hands. The champ (Shawn) stands in one place and punches even faster which apparently is ok. Off to a headlock on the mat but Sid NIPS UP and pounds away. There's a gorilla press attempt but Shawn lands on his feet. Sid tries the powerbomb (POP) but Shawn bails to the floor.

Back in and Shawn takes out the knee before hitting a Robinsdale Crunch (it's a leg lock with Shawn jumping to crush the knee). The fans chant for Sid. Off to a Figure Four for awhile before Sid rolls it over. Shawn goes for the hold again but Sid kicks him shoulder first into the post. Sid slows things down and starts firing off some kicks to the head and ribs.

Shawn avoids a charge into the corner and goes after the knee some more. Sid kicks him into the ropes and Shawn skins the cat, but Sid clotheslines him right to the floor. Shawn gets dropped on the barricade which gets two back inside. Sid hits a few running kicks to the head in the corner as things slow down again. Michaels avoids a charge in the corner and goes up, with the fans openly booing him now.

The champ dives into a backbreaker for two and Shawn can barely get up. Shawn fights up and turns it into a slugout with Sid going down. We get the always stupid looking jump into the boot spot and Sid puts on a cobra clutch. Shawn fights up and walks into a chokeslam. The place is exploding for Sid here. The powerbomb is countered into a small package for two but Sid gets the same off a powerslam.

Shawn nips up and is immediately clotheslined down to a BIG pop. Sid grabs a camera and blasts Jose Lithario (Shawn's manager) in the chest with it for no apparent reason. Shawn superkicks Sid down but stops to look at Jose instead of covering. The referee goes down somewhere in there and Shawn gets hit with the camera as well. Back inside Sid powerbombs Shawn down for the pin and the title. Girl in the front row: "N0000000000000000!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

**Rating:** B. Shawn's heart wasn't in this at all and that was clear throughout the match. His eyes didn't have it in there anymore and it's really no surprise that after February he would take time off to find his smile. This was good stuff for the most part but the ending seemed overdone. Little trivia for you: this is Sid's first title in the WWF or WCW. You would have thought he would have gotten something before then, given the PPVs he main evented.

Shawn scrambles to the back to check on Jose.

**Overall Rating:** B+. There's some awesome stuff on here with a lot of historical stuff in there too. There's one really bad match but it only lasts ten minutes or so. Other than that, this show is pretty much golden. Solid show overall but the company was entering a dark age with the NWO destroying them. That being said, the Austin vs. Bret feud would continue for most of a year and would keep the promotion alive once they hit the double turn in the spring. Good show here and much better than I remember.

### Ratings Comparison

Team Furnas and Lafon vs. Team Owen Hart and British Bulldog

Original: B-

Redo: C+

Undertaker vs. Mankind

Original: C+

Redo: B

Team Hunter Hearst Helmsley vs. Team Marc Mero

Original: D

Redo: C+

Bret Hart vs. Steve Austin

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Team Farroq vs. Team Yokozuna

Original: D-

Redo: F

Sycho Sid vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: C-

Redo: B

Overall Rating

Original: B-

Redo: B+

Like I said, I liked it better than I remembered.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/11/15/history-of-survivor-series-count-up-1996-bret-vs-austin-the-prequel-and-rock-debuts/>

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# Smackdown – October 31, 2014: Scary In All The Wrong Ways

## Smackdown

Date: October 31, 2014

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tom Phillips

We're onto a new set of new stories for a change now with a focus on Cena vs. the Authority and Ambrose vs. Wyatt. That isn't the best pair of stories in the world but we're stuck with this until we get to the Rumble and the wrestling actually matters to the company anymore. It's also Halloween so hopefully things aren't all that campy tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with...Vince. He tells us about the big news from the conference call: November is a free month of the WWE Network (for new subscribers), meaning Survivor Series is a free show. That's quite the incentive and the lack of a commitment should help them in the long run.

## Battle Royal

Paige (Summer Rae), Natalya (Queen of Hearts), Naomi (paratrooper), Summer Rae (schoolgirl nerd), Layla (clown), Emma (Tarzan), Rosa Mendes

(zombie nurse), Cameron (cop), Alicia Fox (firewoman), Nikki Bella (cat)

They're in costumes of course and the winner gets a Divas Title shot so AJ is on commentary. We get a video from earlier today of Brie dressed as Daniel Bryan but Nikki sending her to get her Louis Vaton bag in San Antonio. Naomi quickly kicks Rosa out to the floor and Natalya kicks out Summer (AJ: "There goes the sexy D-Von Dudley.").

Emma gets tossed as well as Layla pulls the stuffing out Paige's top. That earns her an elimination before Cameron and Naomi go out one after another. We're down to Natalya, Paige, Nikki and Fox but Alicia quickly kicks Natalya out. Fox dumps Paige but eliminates herself in the process, giving Nikki the win at 2:43.

Here are Kane, Rollins and the Stooges for a chat. Kane loves this time of year because he gets to torment little kids but the fun keeps going into November with Survivor Series. Tonight though it's Ambrose vs. Cesaro in a Trick or Street Fight but Rollins thinks Bray Wyatt might interrupt. If that happens though, Dean will fall just like he did on Sunday inside the Cell. Rollins laughs at the YOU SOLD OUT chants before taking the focus back to Survivor Series. Who could Cena possibly get on his team? Who would be willing to team with him against the Authority and risk their careers in the process? Kane can think of one man so get out here Dolph Ziggler.

### Kane vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title again. Ziggler dropkicks the knee but the DDT is countered with Kane just throwing Dolph down. A clothesline gets two for Kane but Dolph avoids an elbow drop. Back up and Kane uppercuts Dolph off the top and out to the floor as we take a break. Back with Kane missing a big boot and taking a Fameasser for two. Jamie Noble gets on the apron for a distraction though, allowing the big boot to connect for another two count. The chokeslam is countered into a sunset flip just like Monday but Kane pops up. Ziggler's Stinger Splash is caught in the chokeslam for the pin at 8:27.

**Rating:** D+. Kane. Beat Dolph Ziggler. Clean. In 2014. I'm sure this has nothing to do with Ziggler saying legends can't just come in and get

handed big matches at Wrestlemania earlier this week. If that's true, and given the company's track record it wouldn't be all that shocking, WWE needs to get over itself already.

Post match Kane hits another chokeslam and makes Ziggler vs. Rollins.

#### Seth Rollins vs. Dolph Ziggler

Curb Stomp, 23 seconds.

#### Heath Slater vs. Ryback

Slater is a scarecrow. He hammers away with right hands but loses his fake hand so it's time for air guitar. Ryback plants him with a spinebuster, setting up the Meathook and Shell Shock for the pin at 1:28.

The Exotic Express is looking for people to party with and find Goldust, Stardust, Sin Cara as a Ninja Turtle and R-Truth as a ghost. Truth asks what it's like to have the Bunny upstage Rose all the time and thinks Adam should have been the Bunny for Halloween. Rose laughs it off so Truth gives him a rock. The Bunny hops around Rose and that's it. If there was a point here, I must not be smart enough to get it.

Time for MizTV with Miz saying he may be available to join Team Cena. However that's not what we're here to talk about. Instead, let's focus on the special guest tonight: Mark Henry. Miz asks Mark what happened on Monday but Henry says it was exactly what should have happened. Miz shows us a clip of Rusev making Show tap, which Henry says was a result of Show trying to upstage him.

Show didn't help Henry on Sunday and Mark gets annoyed at the WHAT chants. Henry says Show has been acting like he knows everything for months but he's just a nosy guy with an overactive pituitary gland. It's all about strength but here's Big Show for a brawl. They fight at ringside with Henry sending him into the post and through the barricade.

We recap the Authority vs. Cena on Monday.

#### Stardust/Goldust vs. Los Matadores

Non-title. Before the match the champs say they'd listen to offers from either team at Survivor Series. So the Authority team might not be Authority members? Fernando works on Stardust's arm to start and sends him over to Diego for a dropkick. A slingshot hilo gets two on Stardust but he comes back with a springboard dropkick of his own. The champs send Fernando to the floor and we take a break.

Back with Torito getting knocked off the apron but Fernando plants Stardust, setting up the hot tag to Diego. A hurricanrana sends Diego outside and the masked men hit a huge double suicide dive. Stardust jumps backwards onto both guys before throwing Torito inside. Torito will have none of that though and dropkicks Stardust to the floor, distracting Goldust long enough for Fernando to roll him up for the pin at 7:24. That match needed a commercial?

**Rating:** D. Why do we have titles anymore? The only way they set up a title match is to have the champion lose (or in this show's case, lose TWICE to set up a match where Zigler is just a piece), meaning we need a title match later where Los Matadores can lose. You have a roster so full of people not working and you don't have ANYONE else for Los Matadores to beat to earn a shot? This is getting old in a hurry.

### Rusev vs. Great Khali

The fans chant USA so I guess they're neutral. Khali immediately chops Rusev in the head so the Russian hammers away in the corner. Another chop has the same result so Rusev kicks him in the face and Accolades him for the submission at 47 seconds.

Post match Lana talks about new orders from Russia: crush the US Champion and give the title to Putin as a present. This brings out Sheamus who says he's been waiting on for a long time. The challenge is accepted because Sheamus takes personal pride in what this title represents. Sheamus comes to the ring and tries a Brogue Kick, sending Rusev running. This would be the most logical feud in the world at the moment and exactly what they should have done. It shouldn't be surprising as Rusev's story has been one of the few well done thing in the WWE for months now.

Here's Bray Wyatt for a chat. Today is a special day because all of the



people here get to pretend to be something that they aren't. Have you ever wondered why costuming yourself makes you feel so comfortable? Do you wear a mask to hide from the horrors of the world? Or is it because everyone hates everything about you? You can't pretend forever though because tomorrow morning you're just another one of those anonymous souls.

Dean Ambrose is different though because he never takes off his mask. Ambrose is like Wyatt: a creature, an animal and a monster. Bray understands what it felt like to have someone at a point like Rollins had Ambrose on Sunday. He knows what that power feels like and it makes you feel immortal. You have the power to take everything away from someone and Dean can't just wash away his sins. They will stain him forever and she still cries for him. Follow the buzzards.

#### Dean Ambrose vs. Cesaro

Street fight. There are a bunch of Halloween items at ringside, including about twenty pumpkins inside the ring, because we've got a theme match. Ambrose brings out a candy corn themed kendo stick because even he can make candy corn look cool. Dean hammers away to start and drops Cesaro with a bulldog.

Cesaro comes back with some kendo stick shots to the ribs and right hands to the head followed by a big swing to the chest. More stick shots have Dean in trouble but he blocks a big swing and hammers away with right hands. Cesaro comes right back with a tiger bomb for two followed by more stick shots. He piles up a bunch of pumpkins but can't quite suplex Dean onto the pile.

Instead Dean sends him out to the floor, only to take some more stick shots. A dropkick destroys a bucket full of candy but Cesaro throws him over the announcers' table. Ambrose pops up with a stick of his own before throwing him back inside for a backdrop on the pumpkins. They head outside again with Cesaro nailing him out of the air with a kendo stick.

Dean's head is shoved into a bucket of apples and water but he comes back with a skeleton. Cesaro grabs a chair but gets knocked onto a table with some broom shots. A middle rope elbow with the broom sends Cesaro through

the table on the floor. They head back inside where Ambrose puts a pumpkin on Cesaro's head and Dirty Deeds is good for the pin at 7:18.

**Rating:** C+. This was your usual fun main event with all the weapons and props being used in the right way. Ambrose getting a pin is a good thing and makes him look stronger going into the PPV showdown with Wyatt. Bray can get by on his talking alone and Dean can look good in matches like this one.

Another Dirty Deeds ends the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. Decent wrestling aside, this was one of the most frustrating shows I can remember in along time. We had three losses for champions and Kane of all people getting his win back instead of laying down like he should be doing at this point. Hopefully the audience for this show is so low that most people don't watch and this doesn't mean much. This is a decent show but it's more frustrating than anything else.

### Results

Nikki Bella won a battle royal last eliminating Alicia Fox

Kane b. Dolph Ziggler – Chokeslam

Seth Rollins b. Dolph Ziggler – Curb Stomp

Ryback b. Heath Slater – Shell Shock

Los Matadores b. Stardust/Goldust – Rollup to Goldust

Rusev b. Great Khali – Accolade

Dean Ambrose b. Cesaro – Dirty Deeds

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# Reviewing the Review: Hell in a Cell 2014

So the annual Cell show has come and gone and as expected, a lot has changed coming out of the show. There were two main events inside the big cage and only one of them really belonged there. The big question was which match was ending the show as Orton vs. Cena has a chance even though there was no reason for it to take that spot. Let's get to it.

The pre-show saw Damien Mizdow hosting MizdowTV and doing nothing with Miz. Yeah I kind of missed this part and don't care enough to look it up.

Mark Henry beat Bo Dallas in about thirty seconds to seemingly end their feud. This was pretty much a waste of time but the fans liked it due to Bo's Dallas Cowboys joke.

The opening match saw Ziggler retain the title over Cesaro in two straight falls. The match was good but it was the first of many matches that suffered from the same problem: we've seen so many of these matches in recent weeks that it's hard to get fired up for it again. In this case, the guys had four falls in the span of a week so why should I care about it again? There's a rumor that this is Cesaro's punishment for criticizing the lack of change at the top of the card. If that's the case, my goodness WWE is insecure.

Orton wanted to beat up Rollins after Seth attacked him to end Raw. HHH told him to take it out on Cena. Angle advancement because there isn't enough time for this sort of stuff on Raw I guess.

The Bellas had a passable match with Nikki getting the pin after hitting Brie in the face and hitting the Rack Attack. This made Brie her servant for 30 days and launching a million fan fics about them. The match wasn't terrible but man alive am I over this story. I'm really not sure why WWE thinks this is important or why the masses would care but we've been stuck with it for months now and I'm over it.

In another match we've seen over and over again in six man matches, the

Dust Brothers beat the Usos to retain the titles. It was good enough but I have no reason to care about them fighting again. The division is back to its old problem of having two teams and almost nothing else and that makes for some very repetitive feuds. Maybe they can bring in a new team but there's no fire to the division right now and it's hurting things.

Some singer doesn't like breast cancer. November, please come soon.

Cena beat Orton in another match that the fans didn't want to see but was one of the biggest matches on the show. The win gives Cena another shot at Lesnar because that's another match we haven't seen enough. Orton vs. Lesnar is a legitimate big match but we need to see Cena vs. Lesnar IV and need to wait about two months to get there. Therefore, we're stuck with months of just waiting around doing nothing until we get to a match that people don't seem interested in seeing. Such is life in WWE.

The match itself was good though as the guys have chemistry together, but, say it with me, we've seen it too many times. Austin vs. Rock worked because it was rare, therefore making it a special treat. When you don't see something all that often, it's far easier to get interested in it. The match already happened at the Rumble and happens a few times a year. Why would I want to watch it just because it's inside the Cell when the match is the same thing they always do?

Sheamus beat Miz to retain the US Title, hopefully setting up the obvious feud with Rusev. Again, nothing to see here as we've seen this pairing a half dozen times in tag matches.

Nikki poured a smoothie on Brie's head. This is what we're going to sit through for thirty days and we're supposed to care about Brie, even though she agreed to these terms and lost a fair match.

Rusev beat Big Show in the match that everyone expected. Mark Henry almost cost Show the match but Rusev wound up kicking Show in the face and Accolading him for the win. On to Sheamus and the US Title.

AJ retained the title over Paige in ANOTHER match we've seen over and over again. This is another division that is needing some fresh blood like yesterday.

Seth Rollins beat Dean Ambrose in the main event with the help of a returning Bray Wyatt. This is the match that has gotten the most attention because people were wanting more. Here's what happened: Dean Ambrose beat up Seth Rollins inside the Cell, someone interfered and Rollins won the match and the feud. There's no rematch, there's nowhere else to go, and the feud is over. Sometimes that's what happens and Ambrose doesn't look like a weaker star as a result. He's a far bigger star than he was coming in and Rollins can move on to the feud with Orton. Everyone wins, which is the point of this kind of a feud.

Overall the show was entertaining for the most part but the creative process is just a mess right now. There are at least a dozen ways to build up a feud and WWE seems to use the same one over and over: have the people fight a lot on TV before the PPV then do the same match with a gimmick at the big show.

I have no idea why I'd want to see the Usos vs. Goldust/Stardust again on PPV when they've actually fought eight times on TV since their last pay per view match. Think about that for a minute. In the five weeks between two pay per views, these teams met in either three way tags or six man tags on eight out of ten TV shows. I'm supposed to care about the tenth meeting between these guys in five weeks? That's supposed to excite me?

It's not just the tag division either. Between the PPVs, Cena vs. Orton, Ziggler vs. Cesaro and Sheamus vs. Miz have all taken place five times each. The repetitiveness is driving me crazy, especially when there are guys just sitting there waiting to go out and perform. You can have people talk or do segments, but instead it's just a bunch of matches. Find a balance already and let some new ideas into those stale heads.

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# Hell in a Cell 2014 Preview

This show has a strange build to it as we've seen almost everything there is to see for the setup but I don't know if WWE can give us the payoff we need due to the lack of the violence. We always hear about the violence inside the Cell and how insane it's supposed to be but there's a good chance we're not getting anything close to that. Let's get to it.

We'll start with what is likely going to be the main event and say Cena beats Orton. That's unfortunate as Orton vs. Lesnar could headline a few PPVs in a row but it looks like we're going to get another Cena vs. Lesnar match which really doesn't have a huge audience. Orton is on the brink of a face turn too and face Orton with the RKO against Super Beast Brock would have me drooling. Instead though it's probably going to be Cena and it's probably going to headline the show because that's what WWE seems to think we want to see.

Next up is the match that has had the build and should be the main event since Cena and Orton don't need it, but instead will probably be the show stealer that people want to see close things out. I think Rollins beats Ambrose due to some shenanigans but the drama is going to be amazing. Ambrose could be a huge deal, but I don't see him winning while holding the briefcase. Unfortunately Reigns is kind of holding the match hostage and there are so many possibilities with him in there. I just can't see Ambrose winning, but I think Rollins takes the beating in a lifetime to get the win.

Nikki beats Brie due to interference of some sort. There's just no logic in having Brie win, but it means I don't have to listen to BRIE MODE twice in a row. Nikki wins and is all evil to Brie for a month, setting up yet another match that drags the show down. Somehow Brie is the best face the division has at this point, but I have no idea why I'm supposed to care about these two fighting.

Sheamus beats Miz to retain the title and we get Miz vs. a face Mizdow in the future. Damien has a future due to pure hard work. Imagine that.

Rusev beats Big Show, hopefully by TKO. These two had a match that was way better than it had any right to be recently so maybe they can do it again here.

AJ beats Paige in another match we don't need to see again.

The Dusts retain in a match that feels like we've seen it a dozen times due to all the six man tags.

Ziggler retains over Cesaro, making the losses mean nothing whatsoever.

Overall the show has me interested but my expectations are low due to the violence not being allowed. That's the problem with PG: they can talk the matches up as being the most violent things you'll ever see but they can't deliver due to the restrictions. There's nothing wrong with the restrictions and you certainly can have a violent match in the Cell in this era, but I don't know if the young guys can pull the pathos to make it work.

As for the other Cell match...I just do not care. I've seen these two fight about 40 times now and I do not want to see it again. I don't care that it was in the Cell, I don't care that it's for the title shot and I don't care that it's likely going to headline the show. The interest isn't there and it's high time WWE figures that out. They've WAY overplayed this match and there's almost nothing left for them to do anymore. When they've traded the title so many times before and talked so much about how big and epic their rivalry is, I just do not have enough interest in seeing these two fight.

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# Smackdown – October 24, 2014: In Search Of A Gas Station

## **Smackdown**

Date: October 24, 2014

Location: Intrust Bank Arena, Wichita, Kansas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tom Phillips, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the final show before Hell in a Cell and things are all set. The main story coming out of Raw is Seth Rollins finally attacking Randy Orton, his partner on Monday, by Curb Stomping him to end the show. This is likely going to help set up Orton's face turn and then Orton vs. Rollins, which could be some very interesting stuff down the line. Let's get to it.

Here's Ambrose to open things up. Ambrose talks about defying the laws of physics because he keeps getting back up no matter what the Authority does to him. Yeah it hurts to get knocked down so many times, but the difference between someone like he and Mick Foley is that Foley is a nice guy. Dean doesn't have anything to live for beside hurting the people that hurt him. He's been waiting for this day since Rollins stabbed him in the back for business so if Rollins has any final words, come out here and say them now.

Rollins pops up on screen and says Dean can't call him out. Seth is the one that does the calling out and he'll be doing that later tonight. It was always Dean believing that something special was coming from the Shield but Seth was just using it to get ready for his big moment. On Sunday, Dean Ambrose goes away and Rollins can cash in his contract to become World Champion. Dean wraps it up by saying they'll burn together on Sunday, but Seth will burn alone.



## Miz/Damien Mizdow vs. Los Matadores

Sheamus is on commentary. Damien hammers on Diego to start and it's quickly off to Miz who gets chopped in the corner. Miz comes right back with ten forearms to the chest to annoy Sheamus but the champ is just bored. It's back to Damien, but Fernando kicks him in the face to take over and make the tag to Diego. They head outside for a Figure Four on Diego as Miz puts one on Fernando for the submission at 2:56.

Bo Dallas interrupts the Dusts' odd chat of the week. They're in a six man later and Bo thinks they just need to Bolieve. Goldust: "What a weirdo."

## AJ Lee vs. Alicia Fox

Still non-title despite Fox pinning AJ on Monday. Fox takes her down to start but gets caught in a guillotine choke. Paige, in Fox's corner, shouts instructions to get out of the hold and Fox takes over for the first time. Lee fights out of a chinlock but gets slammed down with ease. Paige gets on the apron but AJ slams them together, setting up a rollup for the pin at 2:04. So AJ now needs heel miscommunication to beat Alicia Fox?

Remember that Wyatt Family video where the Family is free but Bray is never free? Well it's airing again here.

We get a sitdown interview from earlier in the week with Big Show to talk about what happened with the soldier on Monday. Show asked for the interview and we see a clip from the incident to get things going. Big Show talks about how personal some of the things Rusev say can get but Rusev attacked the soldier when the incident was over. He has a lot of friends who are Russians (seriously) and he's had to apologize to them more than once.

Show has been lucky enough to go around the world and meet some wealthy people, but those aren't his heroes. He gets to meet his heroes when he goes around the world and meets the servicemen and women who defend this country. A few years back he met a two star general who broke down when meeting Big Show because it was such a big deal.

Now we get a clip of Big Show's "idol" (to be fair Show laughs this off) Hulk Hogan saying no one is more American than the Big Show. On Sunday, Show is going to feel the power of America and it's going to carry him to victory. We close out the interview where Show says he can't keep his emotions under control but he'll knock Rusev out for a pin on Sunday. This was longer than it needed to be and I see no reason for it not to take place in the arena.

#### Intercontinental Title: Dolph Ziggler vs. Cesaro

Cesaro is challenging after pinning Dolph on Monday. Why the Divas didn't do the same isn't quite clear. They hit the mat to start with Ziggler actually in control but getting nailed in the ribs. Dolph flips out of a monkey flip attempt and gets two off a rollup. A nice pinfall reversal sequence ends with Ziggler nailing a dropkick for two but Cesaro sends him shoulder first into the post.

Back from a break with Cesaro putting on a sleeper but having to break up Ziggler's sleeper a few seconds later. Dolph's hurricanrana is countered so he comes back with a sunset flip for two instead. The running DDT is countered into a spin out slam for two as Cesaro is getting frustrated. A big boot and powerbomb get two more but the Swing is countered into a small package for two. Cesaro loads up an uppercut but gets Zig Zagged to retain the title at 11:25.

**Rating:** C+. Nice match but was there a need to have Dolph lose via pin on Monday? Couldn't you accomplish the same thing by having them both get counted out or something like that, setting up a big match on Sunday? Heaven forbid of course because we need to give Cesaro another win over a champion to make him strong, even though you could do the same by having him Neutralize Ziggler on the floor and win by countout. That might be too much creativity though so it's clear why it didn't happen.

#### Nikki Bella/Cameron/Summer Rae vs. Brie Bella/Naomi/Natalya

Only Brie gets an entrance because we need BRIE MODE. Brie and Cameron get things going and Cameron actually manages to not botch anything in the first ten seconds. She elbows Brie down and starts a YES chant before it's off to Summer for a clothesline. We get a totally genuine Brie chant

as she kicks Summer down but Cameron takes Naomi off the apron. Nikki comes in for the Rack and the pin on Brie at 2:02. Well that happened.

Post match Nikki says for thirty days, she'll be the evil sister and Brie can be the Cinderbella. This is what I sit through for you people. Remember that.

Hell in a Cell by the numbers.

Video on Orton vs. Cena.

Hogan picks Cena to win on Sunday.

### Usos/Mark Henry vs. Goldust/Stardust/Bo Dallas

Dallas runs from Henry to start so it's Stardust and Jey starting instead. A headbutt has Stardust in trouble so it's off to Jimmy vs. Goldust. The Usos clothesline Goldust out to the floor and we take a break. Back with Stardust clotheslining Jimmy before it's off to Goldust for some choking. We hit the chinlock for a bit but Jimmy fights up for an enziguri. The hot tag brings in Henry for clotheslines as everything breaks down. Jey dives onto Goldust and it's Dallas alone with Mark. Henry throws him into the corner but has to World's Strongest Slam Stardust, allowing Bo to hook the Bodog for the pin on Henry at 8:00.

**Rating:** D+. This was every six man tag with two different people to supplement the standard tag match that we've seen a half dozen times now. I don't know what there is to gain by having Dallas pin Henry again as you would think we got the idea when he beat him twice in a row, but that might require a fresh thought from creative.

Ziggler is in the back bragging about his wins when Cesaro comes in and says Dolph got lucky. Cesaro calls the title the most prestigious in the company and asks for a 2/3 falls match for the title on Sunday.

Here are Rollins and the Stooges to the ring where there are some tables covered with weapons. Rollins says he bought in for the millionth time and says it's foreign to everyone here in Kansas. There are no rules on Sunday so let's have a preview of what Ambrose is in store for on Sunday. Seth starts with the handcuffs because Dean has surprised him from

different places. Now he can have Ambrose in one place.

Next up is a screwdriver to prove that Dean has been a screwup all along. Seth picks up a lead pipe to prove that Dean is indeed destructable before moving on to a chair which started the whole thing. We get to the point now as Rollins calls Dean out because this is his chance to have things one on one.

There's no Ambrose though so maybe he's smarter than Seth thought he was. We see a clip from the end of Raw as Ambrose sneaks up behind Seth and nails him with a kendo stick shot. The Stooges come in but Dean fights them off and tries a powerbomb through a table. The Stooges finally do their job and take Dirty Deeds before being elbowed through the tables to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This was about everything other than the Orton vs. Cena match which makes me think that it's getting the main event slot, despite it having no need to do so. The problem with Ambrose vs. Rollins is they have to go insane with the violence to justify everything they've talked about and I don't think that's going to be allowed. The show should be entertaining but I don't know if they'll be able to take it far enough or be able to resist going with Orton vs. Cena as the main event. Nice build show this week but it's clear that these stories are almost out of gas.

### Results

Miz/Damien Mizdow b. Los Matadores – Figure Four to Fernando

AJ Lee b. Alicia Fox – Rollup

Dolph Ziggler b. Cesaro – Zig Zag

Nikki Bella/Summer Rae/Cameron b. Brie Bella/Naomi/Natalya – Rack to Brie

Goldust/Stardust/Bo Dallas b. Usos/Mark Henry – Bodog to Henry

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# Smackdown – October 17, 2014: Not Even Kane?

## Smackdown

Date: October 17, 2014

Location: Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center, Birmingham, Alabama

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

We now have the obvious PPV main events set and for some reason the question is which match goes on last. I can defend a lot of what they do with Cena but there is almost no justification for Rollins vs. Ambrose not going on last. It has a story and the constant interference makes the Cell appropriate. Orton vs. Cena is happening because of history that people are tired of, Orton wanting a match and the calendar saying it's time for the Cell. Let's get to it.

We open with the now standard long recap of the main stories from Raw.

Here's Rollins to get things going. The fans greet him with a YOU SOLD OUT chant and he seems to agree by shouting I SOLD OUT. Yeah he used to have honor, but that's not going to pay his bills. Anyone here would sell out their parents, dog, grandparents, brothers and friends for an opportunity to be like him. The problem though is you'll never be like him because selling out is the best thing you could ever do in your life.

That brings him to his match with Ambrose inside the Cell. Ambrose doesn't belong inside the Cell because he belongs in a straitjacket. Dean may walk into the Cell but he's going to be carried out and left as a hot smelly mess. Rollins has sold out, but at the pay per view, he's going to put Dean out.

Cue Dolph Ziggler to a big ovation. Ziggler says that sound was what you hear when people want to see you. Granted Rollins wouldn't know what a pop sounds like because Ambrose isn't out here. Dolph talks about how you

get everything when you sell out, but when you earn it, you get all that plus self respect. Seth laughs it off and says self respect got Ziggler curb stomped on Monday. Dolph dropkicks him to the floor and wants to start their match right now.

### Dolph Ziggler vs. Seth Rollins

A clothesline puts Dolph on the floor and we take a very early break. Back with Ziggler in trouble and Seth pounding away with right hands. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Seth sends him face first into the buckle for two. Rollins drives some knees into the ribs and talks trash to him about self respect. Back up and Dolph sidesteps a charge to send Seth outside. Rollins comes up limping a bit so Dolph loads up a Figure Four around the post, only to get sent face first into the steel instead.

Rollins tries to come back in off the top but gets pulled down into a faceplant as we take another break. Back again with Seth missing a charge into the corner to put both guys down. Dolph pops up and hits ten very fast punches in the corner but Seth snaps his throat across the top. He heads up top again but this time is able to block the faceplant. Ziggler's jumping DDT gets two and the Zig Zag and Curb Stomp are both countered. The Fameasser is countered into the buckle bomb though and a Curb Stomp gives Dolph his third straight loss at 15:22.

**Rating:** C+. It's the decent match you would expect from these two but these losses for champions are getting annoying. WWE has such a big roster but only Ziggler can take these losses? Were Kofi and Big E. too busy for this match? It gets really old watching these titles lose what little prestige they can build up for the sake of Mr. Money in the Bank. Build up a better midcard or get the title off Ziggler already.

Here's Ambrose after the match with his contract. Rollins runs so Dean lets us know how happy he is to get his hands on Rollins inside the Cell. He can't even say everything he's going to do to Rollins on this show but here's Kane to cut him off. Kane wants a match of his own because the screams of pain make him sleep better at night. Ambrose vs. Kane later tonight.

Erick Rowan is free.

## Layla vs. AJ Lee

Paige and Fox are on commentary. We get an inset interview where AJ says the Divas Title is the only friend she needs and it will never betray her. A quick spinwheel kick gets two on Layla and a pair of rolling neckbreakers gets the same. Layla makes a comeback with some kicks and a headlock, only to miss a cross body and get Black Widowed for the submission at 2:00.

Fox is easily dispatched but Paige lays out AJ with the Rampaige.

Seth comes in to ask Kane to save him a piece of Ambrose but Kane goes into the annual "the Cell is evil" speech. Kane throws out that it's himself/Rollins/Orton vs. Cena/Ambrose in a street fight on Raw.

Sandow dressed up as Sheamus on Main Event and got beaten up.

Sheamus and the Usos are ready for their six man tonight. We get lots of talk about kicking heads off and twin references are made.

## Sheamus/Usos vs. Miz/Stardust/Goldust

Goldust actually takes Sheamus down to start but the pale one comes back with a shoulder block. Off to Stardust who takes a few elbows from the twins and a double elbow drop gets two. Miz comes in and actually takes his glasses off, only to get slammed down by Jimmy for two. Jimmy misses a charge and falls out to the floor, followed by a baseball slide from Jimmy for good measure.

Back from a break with Jey getting caught in a Goldust spinebuster for two. Off to Stardust but Sheamus chases Miz up the ramp. This goes nowhere but gets us away from the match going on in the ring. Goldust goes over to punch Jimmy off the apron but walks into a Samoan drop from Jey. The hot tag brings in Sheamus to clean house, including pulling the top rope down so Jimmy can dive on Stardust. Miz gets knocked off the apron and into the announce table but Goldust catches Sheamus in a powerslam for two. Everything breaks down as the Usos kick Stardust, setting up a Brogue Kick to Goldust for the pin at 11:42.

**Rating:** C-. You know every six man match you've seen with the tag team

and midcard title feuds combined? Well this is the most recent I've seen. There was nothing different, interesting, or remotely special about this match. It's not bad but I can't count how many times we've seen this exact same stuff.

Video on WWE in Malaysia.

Here's Big Show with something to talk about how he sticks out in a crowd. We hear the same stats we've heard about Big Show for years as he talks about having more weight on his shoulders. He's knocked Rusev out twice now and is going to do it again at the PPV. Right now though, he'd like Mark Henry to come out here. Here's Mark, complete with Big Show dancing to his music.

Show tells a story about he and Henry flipping a car over because it cut them off at Waffle House. They're family, which means it's ok for them to take the weight on each others' shoulders in the battles against Rusev. Show gave Henry the space he needed to fight Rusev and now he needs Henry to do the same for him. Henry says that Rusev isn't human but it's going to be hard to see Big Show beat Rusev when he couldn't. He'll give Show what he wants though. The Russians come out for some fat jokes and insult trading between Show and Rusev. Nothing we haven't heard before.

We get a clip from after Raw with the Bellas getting in an argument over being fat. The loser of their match will be the winner's assistant, which I'm sure will be HILARIOUS.

### Nikki Bella vs. Naomi

Nikki shoves her around to start and puts on a very early chinlock. Back up and Naomi scores with a few dropkicks followed by a Rear View for two. That goes nowhere and the Rack ends Naomi at 2:11.

Wyatt is alone video.

Ambrose says he can give Kane all the screams he wants to put him to sleep.

### Kane vs. Dean Ambrose



Kane throws him around to start but Dean fires off right hands and clotheslines Kane out to the floor. Back in and a big boot drops Ambrose and they head right back to the floor. Kane rams Dean's hand into the steps before sending the hand into the corner back inside. Dean comes back with a top rope dropkick and a bulldog for two. He starts the comeback and loads up the Rebound Clothesline but Rollins drags him to the floor for the DQ at 5:44.

**Rating:** D. The match wasn't anything of note but the ending is just stupid. Dean should be heading for the main event of a PPV but he can't pin KANE nine days before? I can understand not pinning Cena, but Kane's entire job at this point is to put people over and not cause any major disasters.

Rollins and Kane go after Dean but he fights them off with a chair to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. This was the least interesting Smackdown I can remember in a long time. The show flew by and felt more like a setup for Raw than ever. It's not a horrible show but when Ambrose can't even get a rollup on Kane and we see the same Divas match we've seen for months now, it's really hard to get into things. Smackdown is at its best when it has self contained stories and some decent matches. As soon as it becomes a supplement for Raw, most of the good goes away. Not much to see this week.

### Results

Seth Rollins b. Dolph Ziggler – Curb Stomp

AJ Lee b. Layla – Black Widow

Sheamus/Usos b. Goldust/Stardust/Miz – Brogue Kick to Goldust

Nikki Bella b. Naomi – Rack

Dean Ambrose b. Kane via DQ when Seth Rollins interfered

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# Monday Night Raw – September 22, 2014: Night of Night Of Champions Rematches

## Monday Night Raw

Date: September 22, 2014

Location: FedEx Forum, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're past Night of Champions and heading towards Hell in a Cell in about five weeks. The main story is Seth Rollins breaking up Cena's very close near fall on Brock Lesnar to end the show. The key is it makes Cena believe he can beat Lesnar, likely setting up another match inside the Cell. If they let them go nuts, that could be a classic. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the main event and Lesnar laying out Cena to end the show.

Here's the returning Dean Ambrose to start things off. "I'M NOT DEAD!" Dean says he's had to replay the incident over and over again and he can appreciate being attacked two on one. We look at Kane and Rollins giving him a curb stomp onto some cinder blocks. The Authority going to such lengths to get rid of him makes him feel special. Tonight he's the authority and he isn't leaving until he gets his hands on Seth Rollins

because he never gets tired of hitting Seth Rollins in the face.

Dean gets a chair and sits in the middle of the ring but here's Cena to interrupt. Ambrose says he doesn't like Cena standing in the ring with him right now and Cena doesn't want Ambrose having a reason to not like him. Cena says he has a reason to be angry because Seth Rollins stopped him from beating Brock Lesnar last night. He wants Rollins tonight and says no one is going to stop him, implying he'll fight Ambrose to get to Seth. Dean says not to get in his way but Cena gets ready to fight. Ambrose takes his jacket off but here's the full Authority to interrupt.

HHH says Rollins won't be fighting tonight but Cena and Ambrose will. Cena and Ambrose aren't interested in listening and charge at the Authority. Rollins bails with Ambrose and Cena giving chase. We cut to the back with Rollins running away from Ambrose and Cena before stealing a car to escape. Dean and John look at each other but nothing happens.

After a break, the Authority has a meeting and makes Kane vs. Ambrose and Cena vs. Orton. Kane isn't pleased but agrees to the chance for revenge. Orton doesn't like having to put out Rollins' fires. WWE announced Orton vs. Ambrose before the show so I guess they already changed it.

#### Intercontinental Title: Miz vs. Dolph Ziggler

Miz is defending after winning the title last night and Mizdow has a small replica title in a nice touch. No R-Ziggler in Dolph's corner either. We actually get big match intros. Feeling out process to start with Dolph grabbing a headlock but getting Miz scores with a shoulder. A knee to the ribs puts Ziggler down and we hit the chinlock. The Figure Four is countered, sending Miz shoulder first into the post. Not that it matters much though as Ziggler gets caught with a neckbreaker onto the apron and we take a break.

Back with Miz hitting the corner clothesline but he gets dropkicked out of the air when trying the top rope ax handle. The Fameasser is countered but Dolph hits the running DDT to put both guys down. Back up and Miz blocks the superkick before slapping on the Figure Four. Ziggler eventually gets to the ropes and rolls to the floor where he clotheslines Miz and Mizdow.

Back in and Miz hits a quick Skull Crushing Finale for a very close two. Ziggler gets the same off the Fameasser but Miz blocks the Zig Zag. A superkick knocks Mizdow off the apron but Miz rolls Dolph up and grabs the trunks. Dolph rolls through though and grabs a rollup (and trunks) of his own to get the title back at 12:56.

**Rating:** C+. The near falls were good here and Ziggler feels like he earned the belt, but what in the world is the point in trading the title back and forth in two days? Both guys get an extra title reign and now we're right back where we were twenty four hours ago. I like that they're having some action, but how about letting something last more than a day?

We recap Reigns being taken off the card and Ambrose coming in to fight Rollins.

#### Jack Swagger vs. Bo Dallas

Swagger takes him into the corner to start but Dallas takes him across the ring for a knee to the ribs. A clothesline drops Jack and some knee drops to the head get two. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Jack runs him over and hits a Vader Bomb. Dallas goes back to the ribs and gets two off a neckbreaker. Not that it matters as a quick Patriot Lock makes Bo tap at 3:18.

**Rating:** D. This didn't have time to go anywhere but is there a point to having them alternate wins on three straight shows? That's the second match in a row where the guys are just trading victories and I'm not sure who is gaining anything out of it. Swagger winning is a good thing at least.

Zeb makes fun of Bo's catchphrase post match.

We get a quick tribute to Howard Stern Show personality Eric the Actor who died over the weekend.

#### Summer Rae vs. Natalya

This is your Total Divas match of the week with Summer calling Natalya jealous to start. We get a clip from the three month old issue that started this problem where Natalya pulled Summer out of a car. Rae takes

her down for a figure four full nelson followed by a front chancery. Natalya comes back by slamming Summer's face into the mat and one of the worst looking discus lariats I've ever seen. Summer was falling down before any contact and it looked awful. Rosa Mendes and Layla get in a fight on the floor as the Sharpshooter makes Summer tap at 2:20.

### Dean Ambrose vs. Kane

Ambrose hammers away in the corner to start and takes Kane down with right hands. A middle rope elbow to the jaw gets one but Dean has to fight out of a chokeslam attempt. Dean sends him out to the floor and nails a suicide dive but Kane takes him down with a big boot and sends Ambrose into the steps. Back in and Kane works on an armbar before uppercutting Dean out of the air for two.

It's back to the armbar which Kane is barely cranking on. They get up with Dean nailing a DDT followed by the Rebound Clothesline. A missile dropkick gets two on Kane but he pops back up and grabs Dean by the throat for the chokeslam. Ambrose quickly counters into Dirty Deeds but Rollins runs out for the DQ at 5:30.

**Rating:** C. Better match than expected here but it's still nothing great. I don't see why you couldn't have Kane get pinned here but at least Ambrose had him beaten at the end. Dean is on fire after everything that has happened to him and with no Reigns around, there's a big door open for him if he they use him right.

Dean fights off Rollins but Kane plants him with a chokeslam. Rollins goes back to get some more but Dean has a chair and tells him to come on. Seth backs down of course.

After a break, Ambrose is locked in a room by security and the Authority. Stephanie: "Have we ever thrown someone out that didn't come back?" I love logical lines like that.

We get the video on Reigns' surgery and the repeated announcement that he'll be out for months.

### Sheamus/Usos vs. Goldust/Stardust/Cesaro

Jey and Goldust start things off with a quick feeling out before it's off to Jimmy for a big backdrop. Off to Stardust who sends Jimmy into the corner but has to duck a superkick. The Dusts bail to the floor for a breather and it's off to Sheamus to hammer on Cesaro. They trade heavy forearms before tagging in Goldust and Jey with the Uso getting two off a splash. Back to Stardust for some forearms to Jey's back before they trade armbars. Goldust comes back in as Stardust trips him up as we take a break.

Back with Jey fighting out of Stardust's dragon sleeper before getting up a boot in the corner. The hot tag brings in Sheamus to clean house with the rolling fireman's carry and ten forearms to the chest. Stardust escapes a powerslam but tags in Cesaro who pulls Sheamus out to the floor in a big crash. Back in and a middle rope ax handle gets two on Sheamus and Cesaro puts on something like a reverse Crippler Crossface. Goldust comes in again for a chinlock and knee drop before tagging back to his brother.

Sheamus fights out of a front facelock before blocking a top rope cross body with an ax handle to put both guys down. The double tag brings in Jey and Goldust with the Uso cleaning house. Jimmy makes a quick tag and hits a Whisper in the Wind to both champions. Everything breaks down and the Superfly Splash hits Goldust's knees. The Final Cut looks to finish Jimmy but Sheamus makes a last second save. Cesaro and Sheamus go outside and Jey hits the Superfly Splash on Goldust for the pin at 15:42.

**Rating:** C. The match was ok but it felt much more long than good. The Usos should get a rematch after being champions for seven months and this is a decent enough way of setting it up. At least it's better than just saying "oh they have a rematch clause." Sheamus vs. Cesaro again would be entertaining but there are other challengers to go after the title.

Rollins comes up to Orton and doesn't like the putting out fires line from earlier. Seth agrees to be in his corner later tonight.

Here's the Next Generation thing they've been talking about. As is almost always the case, it's for the new video game. This is set to Bawitaba by Kid Rock of all sings.

Mark Henry comes out to address the fans after his loss to Rusev last night. He says he's heartbroken and can't believe he let everyone down. This brings out Rusev and Lana for some Russian gloating. Lana tells everyone to shut up and makes fun of the Memphis crowd. She offers Henry another match with Rusev tonight and Henry says bring it on.

### Rusev vs. Mark Henry

This is joined in progress with Rusev hammering away and taking Henry down for a side choke. We look at Henry getting his back injured last night as the hold keeps going. Mark fights up so Rusev dropkicks him down and puts the hold on again. Henry finally stays up and slams Rusev down but hurts his back again. They head outside with Rusev being sent into the steps after trying to drive Henry in again. Back in and Henry tries a very slow Vader Bomb but gets pulled down, sending him ribs first into the mat. The Accolade makes Henry pass out at 7:30.

**Rating:** D+. This was long and dull but it was a much better ending than last night. Not that it matters after Henry looked like such a loser after last night but at least they're getting the right idea. I could have done without another rematch this soon though as this is the second from last night and third from the last week.

### Adam Rose/The Bunny vs. Heath Slater/Titus O'Neil

It had to happen eventually. Titus runs over Rose to start and hits an over the shoulder backbreaker. Off to Slater for a side kick and a chinlock as the Bunny plays cheerleader on the apron. Rose kicks Slater away but Titus breaks up the hot tag attempt. The Bunny ducks a right hand from O'Neil and Adam finally makes the hot tag. The Bunny comes in with a bunch of kicks and a few tail wags before low bridging Titus to the floor. A big spinning kick to the face drops Slater and a seated senton off the apron takes out Titus. The Party Foul is enough for the pin on Slater at 3:10.

**Rating:** C+. Yeah I liked it. I don't think there's much else to be said here.

Here's Nikki Bella to address Brie's interview last night where Brie said

she didn't want Nikki to become Divas Champion. She immediately calls out Brie for a chat and trash is already being talked. Nikki says Brie should be called Nikki's Trashy Sister and wants to be the only Bella. Brie won't do it so Nikki brings up the obvious question: why hasn't Brie taken her husband's name? Nikki calls Bryan a troll so Brie tries a YES Lock, sending Nikki running to the floor.

### AJ Lee vs. Nikki Bella

Paige is on commentary. AJ cranks on the arm to start before taking the non-champion down with a headscissors. A pair of neckbreakers get two on Nikki and they head out to the floor. Nikki sends AJ into Paige and the Brit is ticked off. Back in and Nikki gets two before putting on a swinging sleeper. There's a cross armbreaker on AJ but she powers out, only to get caught in an Alabama Slam for two. Back up and Nikki misses a charge into the corner, allowing AJ to put on the Black Widow for the submission at 5:10.

**Rating:** D+. The longer the Bellas aren't around a championship the better things are. Nikki wanting to fight over the Bella name is about as stupid of a way as they could go but that's what this entire feud has been since the beginning. Thankfully AJ has dominated them every time to keep the evil from coming even more to the forefront.

A large black box is brought to ringside.

### Randy Orton vs. John Cena

Randy takes him down with a headlock to starts but Cena quickly shakes him off, only to get pounded down in the corner. Now it's John firing off right hands, followed by a bulldog for two. We take a break and come back with Cena being sent to the floor and into the announcers' table. The Elevated DDT is countered with a backdrop over the top and Cena has a breather. Back in and they collide but it's Orton up first and taking Cena into the corner.

Orton puts on a sleeper for a bit until Cena escapes with the ProtoBomb. Randy escapes an STF attempt and takes Cena's head off with a clothesline. He loads up a superplex but opts for a top rope Elevated DDT



for a very close two instead. Cena pops back to his feet and grabs the STF, drawing in Kane and Rollins for the DQ at 15:15.

**Rating:** C. How in the world was this a fifteen minute match? This really didn't work too well as it felt like they were just waiting to get to the obvious Ambrose surprise at the end. Rollins has now run in on three matches in two days which is a bit much to put it mildly. The match wasn't bad but it ran longer than it needed to.

Post match the Authority loads up the Curb Stomp on the blocks under the box, but it's Ambrose because...well what else was it going to be? Dean destroys everything in sight and Rollins runs off, leaving Ambrose and Cena to clean house to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This show wasn't bad but it was mainly a long recap of last night. I really liked the opening sequence with Ambrose and Cena looking like the new Super Best Friends trying to take down the Authority. The ending helped that story but there wasn't much between the opening and closing. It was mainly recaps and rematches which weren't very good in the first place. That being said, it was nice to go completely away from the Lesnar stuff, at least for a week. It's not the worst show in a long time but it didn't blow my skirt up.

### Results

Dolph Ziggler b. Miz – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Jack Swagger b. Bo Dallas – Patriot Lock

Natalya b. Summer Rae – Sharpshooter

Dean Ambrose b. Kane via DQ when Seth Rollins interfered

Sheamus/Usos b. Cesaro/Goldust/Stardust – Superfly Splash to Goldust

Rusev b. Mark Henry via referee stoppage

AJ Lee b. Nikki Bella – Black Widow

John Cena b. Randy Orton via DQ when Seth Rollins and Kane interfered

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# Smackdown – September 12, 2014: Time For A Tag Match Playa

## Smackdown

Date: September 12, 2014

Location: Mohegan Sun Arena, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Tom Phillips

We're coming off a good Raw for the first time in far too long and the main story is Reigns getting taken out to end the show. It looks like we're heading for Reigns vs. Rollins and Jericho vs. Orton, though they would likely be better off with just having a tag match instead. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the end of Raw and Reigns taking a Curb Stomp onto a chair.

Usos/Big Show/Mark Henry vs. Wyatt Family/Goldust/Stardust

This is just Harper and Rowan and not a handicap match if that isn't clear. Jimmy chops on Goldust in the corner to start before doing the same to Stardust. Jey comes in to choke on the ropes a bit and start in

on the arm. Back to Jimmy to face Harper with Luke missing a clothesline and getting dropkicked down. Mark gets the tag for a splash in the corner but Luke clotheslines him down for two. Bray comes down to ringside but Big Show stands in his way as we take a break.

Back with Jimmy superkicking Harper and nailing him with an enziguri. Bray is nowhere in sight. Luke backdrops him to the apron and Jimmy slips off, injuring his own knee. Stardust likes what he sees and sends Jimmy into the announcers' table before handing it off to Goldust. A clothesline to the back of the head gets two and it's back to Harper with a dropkick for two. Rowan comes in for a knee drop to give us a complete set of heels not going after the injured limb.

Not that it matters though as Jimmy is able to Samoan drop Rowan on the bad knee. Goldust comes in and gets superkicked, allowing for the hot tag to Big Show for some house cleaning. Stardust takes the worst of it but the Dusts are actually able to suplex Big Show down. The Wyatts take Henry to the floor, allowing Jimmy to dive onto everyone. The Disaster Kick staggers Show but he comes back with the KO Punch and a Superfly Splash from Jey pins Stardust at 11:04.

**Rating:** C-. What was the point in having Jimmy hurt his knee if they were just going to forget about it thirty seconds later? At least have someone kick the leg a few times after it. That being said, I'd definitely prefer not to have two members of a team both having leg injuries as the injured limb is being overused as it is. The match wasn't bad but just kind of there.

We recap Heyman and Cena from Raw.

Kane praises Reigns and Rollins for their actions on Raw. Rollins says he knew he could get inside Reigns' head and promises to take him out tonight. It's Reigns/Jericho vs. Orton/Rollins later.

### Bo Dallas vs. Justin Gabriel

Colter and Swagger are at ringside. After the bell, Dallas says most of the fans are destined to be failures for their entire lives, but they could be just like him if they just Believe! Dallas calls himself

America's Sweetheart and asks everyone to put their hand over their heart, but Zeb interrupts. He says if Dallas is America's Sweetheart, then he's "Arianna freaking Grande. And I don't even know who that is!"

After a minute and a half of talking, Gabriel starts firing off kicks and rolls Dallas up for two. A hard whip sends Gabriel into the buckle and we hit the chinlock. Gabriel comes back with a springboard cross body and an STO but the moonsault misses, setting up the Bodog for the pin at 4:10.

**Rating:** D+. It's almost not fair to rate this as they only fought for about two minutes after all the talking. The match was every Bo Dallas match you've seen yet but that's fine in this case as he finally has something to do. I'm glad he didn't get the "Vince is bored with you" treatment that so many others have suffered through as Dallas has potential to be a good pest.

Dallas runs from Swagger post match.

#### Paige vs. Summer Rae

Non-title. AJ is on commentary of course. Summer stomps away in the corner to start and puts on a full nelson leg lock. Paige fights out with a headbutt and some clotheslines followed by a series of knees to the ribs. A Black Widow makes Summer tap at 1:46.

AJ comes in and lays out Summer with the Paige Turner before skipping away. Paige freaks out again.

It's time for some good old fashioned arm wrestling between Rusev and Mark Henry. Before the match, Lana offers Henry a chance to get out of the match by forfeiting. She brings up Henry leaving the Olympics with an injury but Henry will have none of it. He never thought he would have the chance to represent his country again and there's the USA chant. Henry easily wins in a few seconds. Rusev wants a rematch left handed and Lana throws powder in Henry's face so Rusev can beat him down.

Jericho talks about losing the cage match on his own terms. He can live with that, but he can't live with Orton attacking him to make a statement. Jericho calls himself the Snake Shredder and the Copperhead

Crusher and promises to take care of Orton. We get a hiss to cap things off.

### Miz/Damien Mizdow vs. Dolph Ziggler/R-Truth

Ziggler says Truth (R-Ziggler) is his stunt double tonight and we get Truth in Dolph attire, complete with the hip swivel on the stage. JBL and Cole are nice enough to play up the joke. Mizdow vs. Ziggler to start but it's quickly off to Truth for Dolph's big elbow and two. Off to a front facelock from Ziggler before the good guys try to do a twin switch in a funny bit. A pair of hiptosses and clotheslines put Miz and Mizdow on the floor as we take a break.

Back with Ziggler crawling over to tag in Truth who is still wrestling like Dolph. Mizdow takes a right hand for his boss, allowing Miz to kick Truth in the face. The Reality Check gets two for Miz but Truth escapes the same thing from Mizdow. Back to Miz who walks into a DDT, allowing for the hot tag to Dolph. Everything breaks down and the good guys use each others' signature moves, capped off by Truth hitting a Zig Zag on Mizdow to give Dolph the pin at 11:04.

**Rating:** C+. The wrestling wasn't great but this was at least a funny idea and the announcers played up the joke really well. Dolph did say that this was one night only, which is for the best as it would get old fast. For a one off joke though, it advances the story and keeps us from having Miz vs. Ziggler one on one again.

We look at the Bellas and Springer segment from Raw.

Nikki talks about how she's been the victim for years when AJ comes in and says Nikki got into the title match by being Stephanie's lap dog. Paige comes in and says she'll beat AJ one last time so they can be best friends. Nikki thinks this could be easy.

### Chris Jericho/Roman Reigns vs. Seth Rollins/Randy Orton

The brawl quickly heads to the floor and Reigns wants to get his hands on Orton. Reigns gets sent face first into the announcers' table though and we take a break. Back with Orton hitting a running clothesline in the

corner and putting on the chinlock. Roman fights up and slams Orton down to make the tag off to Jericho.

Chris cleans house and sends Rollins into the buckle before putting on the Walls. He has to let go to take care of Orton but comes right back with a bulldog. Orton breaks up the Lionsault though and the Authority takes over again. Randy hammers away and gets two off the powerslam. Rollins comes back in and gets backdropped to the floor, only to circle around and break up the tag to Reigns.

Jericho fights up and dropkicks Randy, allowing the hot tag to Roman. The big man cleans house and sends Rollins to the floor before tagging in Jericho for a high cross body on Orton. The former Shield members head into the crowd as Orton loads up the Elevated DDT, only to have Jericho counter into a rollup for the pin at 12:09.

**Rating:** C-. This was short, energetic and set up the matches at Night of Champions. It's fine to have Jericho win here as losing to a former World Champion on a quick rollup is hardly going to crush Orton. Reigns and Rollins weren't really a factor in this but their story is already set up.

**Overall Rating:** C. Tonight was a by the book episode of Smackdown: advance everything but the main event, have some tag matches and recap stuff from Raw. It's just a supplement to Raw but I'll take that over a lot of boring episodes that we so often get. There's nothing to see here but it could have been far worse.

### Results

Usos/Big Show/Mark Henry b. Wyatt Family/Goldust/Stardust – Superfly Splash to Stardust

Bo Dallas b. Justin Gabriel – Bodog

Paige b. Summer Rae – Black Widow

Dolph Ziggler/R-Truth b. Damien Mizdow/Miz – Ziggler pinned Mizdow after a Zig Zag from R-Truth

Chris Jericho/Randy Orton b. Seth Rollins/Randy Orton – Rollup to Orton